

ArtsOhio Blog

The ArtsOhio Blog is the Ohio Arts Council's way to share stories that highlight the arts in Ohio, feedback from the field, interviews with artists and staff, and more. Sign up for the ArtsOhio newsletter to receive a curated selection of posts each month.



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Ample color splashes through Ohio Arts Council's Riffe Gallery in *Watercolor Ohio 2016: 39th Annual Juried Exhibition* (<http://www.oac.ohio.gov/Riffe-Gallery/Exhibitions/Watercolor-Ohio-2016>). In the Riffe Gallery's fourth collaboration with the Ohio Watercolor Society (OWS), you'll find an impressive 82 works of art by 82 artists—juried by Carrie Burns Brown, a mixed media artist and a National Watercolor Society member.

Among 263 entries, Burns Brown sought something that struck her emotionally “a uniqueness of spirit combined with dynamic design and expressive content. I respond to work where the artist went beyond ordinary solutions to express their intent.”

The exhibition's dense number of works provides a rich variety of approaches, subject matter, and techniques. Landscapes, portraits, still lifes, abstractions, urban landscapes, and water scenes span the gallery walls. These works, by artists with close ties to the state as OWS members, are layered with personal stories and bring new life and fluidity into the gallery.

Movement and Play

Threads tie *Watercolor Ohio 2016* together with multiple layers beyond subject matter. The medium's inherently fluid characteristics evoke movement and play.



CODY HEICHEL

The Westin, Columbus

2016

Watercolor

30" x 22"

Artist Cody Heichel embraces the watercolor's whimsical qualities through application, color, and form. Heichel has been capturing the rising energy in downtown Columbus, Ohio, for many years. Heichel's *The Westin, Columbus* depicts a vibrant day of activity on a High Street intersection not far from the Riffe Gallery's doors.



JEFF STAHLER

Climbing Wall

2016

Watercolor

14" x 10.5"

Often associated with the art of play is the world of comics, and artist Jeff Stahler is no stranger to that field. Stahler, a nationally syndicated cartoonist, has been an editorial cartoonist for the Columbus Dispatch, The Cincinnati Post and The Columbus Citizen-Journal. Stahler recently returned to watercolor painting through associations with the Central Ohio Watercolor Society, Ohio Plein Air Society and Central Ohio Plein Air. The loose, gestural marks in Stahler's *Climbing Wall*, signify a break from political and social commentary to focus on form and composition.



CAROL GRIFFITH

Bad Science 5

2015

Watercolor

30" x 30"

BRONZE MEDAL WINNER

Brush marks and application can evoke a sense of play or we can see a literal representation of play. Carol Griffith's *Bad Science 5* accomplishes the latter. Her intricate work is a contrast with its tight realistic application yet her placement encourages one's eyes to move around, amongst, and between her depicted toy objects. Although her subject may be children's toys, their innocent composition is highly suspicious. Layered with symbolism and allegory, *Bad Science 5* can arrest viewers into playing with countless narrative scenarios.

Come Play at Riffe Gallery

The OAC Riffe Gallery is pleased to offer free workshops and demonstrations by various artists featured in *Watercolor Ohio 2016* including Cody Heichel, Jeff Stahler, and Carol Griffith. Invite your family and friends to Cody Heichel's "Playshop" on Saturday, December 3, 2–4 p.m. Heichel will demonstrate wax-resist techniques in fine art and craft-based projects. Participants will create personalized watercolor paintings, as well as one-of-a-kind greeting cards. To register click [here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/family-and-friends-playshop-with-artist-cody-heichel-tickets-28422972877). (https://www.eventbrite.com/e/family-and-friends-playshop-with-artist-cody-heichel-tickets-28422972877) Both Jeff Stahler and Carol Griffith invite you to drop-in to watch their demonstrations. Stahler will lead his demonstration on Wednesday, December 7, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. and Carol Griffith will demonstrate her methods on Wednesday, January 4, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

These are just a few of the works in this bright display that is sure to liven up gray winter days ahead. Catch *Watercolor Ohio 2016* through January 7, 2017. For more information and to learn more about the special free classes and demonstrations in conjunction with the exhibition click [here](http://www.oac.ohio.gov/Riffe-Gallery/Exhibitions/Watercolor-Ohio-2016). (http://www.oac.ohio.gov/Riffe-Gallery/Exhibitions/Watercolor-Ohio-2016)

The Riffe Gallery is open Monday through Wednesday, and Friday from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Thursdays from 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., and Saturdays 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Top image credit: Dee Fagedes, *Bliss*, 2016, acrylic/watercolor, 19" x 21"

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2017 will be here in no time! How are you incorporating the arts and creativity into your #2017resolutions?

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It's not 2017 yet but we're already looking ahead to 2018! Check out all of our updated grant guidelines for 2018 at ow.ly/KH72307ndZf

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